

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7055
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NIAMEY 287

EXDIS

KINSHASA FOR MCGINLEY

REF: STATE 17655

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS NG

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT DIORI CONCERNING REQUEST FOR
WITHDRAWAL OF PAO

SUMMARY. I MET WITH PRESIDENT DIORI EVENING JANUARY 27
UNDER INSTRUCTIONS. DESPITE EXPRESSION REGRETS AND
REQUEST THAT DECISION BE RECONSIDERED, DIORI INSISTED THAT
PAO BE RECALLED. DIORI WILLING ADMIT PRINTING OF ANTI-
GOVERNMENT TRACTS MAY HAVE HAPPENED PRIOR INCUMBENT PAO'S
ARRIVAL. HE SAID DECISION TO ASK MCHALE BE WITHDRAWN
BASED LESS ON PRINTING INCIDENT OR FREQUENTATIONS OF CENTER
BY DISSIDENT TEACHERS THAN ON FACT THAT PAO NO LONGER ENJOYS
CONFIDENCE OF PRESIDENT AND GON. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS
UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO SAY USG COULD NOT ACCEDE TO REQUEST
FOR VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL OF PAO ON BASIS OF WHAT I HAD BEEN
TOLD PREVIOUSLY. DIORI SAID THAT BECAUSE PAO NO

LONGER
HAS HIS CONFIDENCE THERE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO WITHDRAW
HIM. IF USG REFUSED WITHDRAW, PAO WOULD BE DECLARED
PERSONA NON GRATA. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRESIDENT DIORI RECEIVED ME LATE EVENING JANUARY 27.

OUMAROU YOUSOUFOU WAS ALSO PRESENT BUT REMAINED SILENT THROUGHOUT MEETING. I INFORMED THE PRESIDENT USG CONSIDERS THE QUESTION OF THE RECALL OF THE PAO A GRAVE MATTER AND THAT I WAS THEREFORE ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS. I ALSO INFORMED PRESIDENT THAT AMBASSADOR DIALLO HAD BEEN CALLED IN BY DEPARTMENT AND GIVEN USG POSITION. AFTER EXPRESSING REGRETS THAT OUR FACILITIES WERE USED UNBEKNOWN TO US BY NIGERIAN PROFESSOR TO PRINT ANTI-GOVERNMENT MATERIAL, IS ASSURED HIM WE HAD TAKEN STRICT MEASURES TO PREVENT REOCCURENCE AS SOON AS WE LEARNED OF MISUSE. I ALSO EXPLAINED THAT AS FAR AS WE KNEW THE DEED HAD BEEN COMMITTED BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF MCHALE, BUT EVEN IF IT WERE PROVEN THAT PRINTING HAD TAKEN PLACE WHILE HE WAS IN COUNTRY, THE USG CONSIDERED THAT REQUESTING HIS RECALL FOR SOMETHING THAT TOOK PLACE WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE WAS AN EXTREME STEP, FAR BEYOND THE GRAVITY OF THE ACT. THEREFORE IN VIEW OF THE NEARLY 15 YEARS OF CLOSE, FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND NIGER, I ASKED HIM TO RECONSIDER HIS REQUEST FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF MCHALE.

2. DIORI SAID HE PLACED HIGHEST VALUE ON EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH US. HE ADDED THAT US HAD PROVEN TIME AND TIME AGAIN, PARTICULARLY DURING DROUGHT, THAT IT WAS TRUE AND GENEROUS FRIEND OF NIGER. HE CLAIMED HE TOOK ALL OF THIS INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN HE DECIDED TO ASK THAT PAO BE RECALLED, AND HE THEREFORE CHOSE TO USE PRIVATE CHANNELS RATHER THAN FOREIGN MINISTRY IN ORDER TO KEEP MATTER QUIET AND NOT DISRUPT EXISTING GOOD RELATIONS. PRESIDENT SAID NIGER WAS CURRENTLY FACING GRAVE CRISIS WITH ITS STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. ACCORDING TO HIM STUDENT PROBLEM WAS BEING BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT STILL HAD TO DEAL WITH THE TEACHERS AND SOME FOREIGNERS. GOVERNMENT WAS TURNING OVER A QUOTE NEW LEAF UNQUOTE IN ITS APPROACH TO EFFORTS BY TEACHERS AND INTELLECTUALS TO SUBVERT THE STUDENTS. IT WAS THUS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS WITH THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS THAT HE VIEWED WHAT HAD HAPPENED AT THE USIS CULTURAL CENTER. PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS HE WOULD ALSO CALL IN FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND UNDP RESIDENT REP AND ASK THAT SEVERAL FRENCH COOPERANTS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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UN EXPERTS BE TRANSFERRED OUT OF COUNTRY. HE SAID AS MUCH AS HE VALUES RELATIONS WITH THE US, FRANCE AND THE UNDP, IF HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT NO LONGER HAVE QUOTE CONFIDENCE UNQUOTE IN A PERSON, REGARDLESS OF HIS NATIONALITY OR POSITION, HE WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE. EVERY EFFORT HOWEVER WOULD BE MADE TO EFFECT THE DEPARTURE QUIETLY AND WITHOUT PUBLICITY.

3. PRESIDENT ADMITTED HE COULD NOT PROVE CONCLUSIVELY WHEN PRINTING OF TRACTS ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE, BECAUSE KABA EVIDENTLY TOLD PAO ONE STORY AND SECURITY ANOTHER. HE SIAD, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NEGLIGENCE BY ONE OF THE CENTER'S DIRECTORS AND SECURITY BELIEVES IT HAPPENED DURING MCHALE'S TENURE. HE THEN MENTIONED THE INCIDENT WHERE FRENCH DIRECTOR OF PEDAGOGIC INSTITUTE WAS ASKED TO LEAVE ON 48 HOURS NOTICE BECAUSE PRINTING OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT TRACT HAD BEEN TRACED TO INSTITUTE. DIORI SAID IT WAS ALSO KNOWN THAT QUOTE LEFTIST, SUBVERSIVE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS UNQUOTE FREQUENTED CULTURAL CENTER. PRESIDENT SAID NEVERTHELESS THAT HE WAS REQUESTING MCHALE BE TRANSFERRED NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE HE CONSIDERED CXCURRENT PAO RATHER THAN PREDECESSOR GUILTY OF THE NEGLIGENCE OR THAT MCHALE HAD ASSOCIATION WITH THE DISSIDENT PROFESSORS AND THE FREQUENTED CENTER, BUT PRIMARILY BECAUSE MCHALE QUOTE NO LONGER ENJOYS MY AND MY GOVERNMENT'S CONFIDENCE UNQUOTE. DIORI SAID EVEN IF HE RECONSIDERED DECISION AS I HAD REQUESTED AND ALLOWED PAO TO REMAIN, HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FUNCTION IN NIGER SINCE HE WOULD NO LONGER HAVE ENTREE TO ANYONE IN GON. THUS THE ONLY COURSE OF ACTION WAS FOR USG TO RECALL HIM. PRESIDENT REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES HE DID NOT WISH SEE PAO'S CAREER HARMED BY BEING ASKED TO LEAVE BUT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT NO LONGER COULD WORK WITH HIM AS RESULT OF SUSPICIONS STEMMING FROM ASSOCIATIONS AND INCIDENT AT CULTURAL CENTER. PRESIDENT ALSO MENTIONED BRIEFLY IN PASSING THAT FOREIGN MINISTER OBJECTED TO PAO'S STATEMENT OF REFUTATION OF CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST USIS CENTER (NIAMEY 238).

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O 281453Z JAN 74 ZFF-4
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INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NIAMEY 287

EXDIS

4. PRESIDENT SAID HE WANTED ME TO REQUEST USG TO TRANSFER PAO AND ASKED WHETHER I COULD ASSURE HIM THIS WOULD BE DONE WITHIN REASONABLE TIME. I TOLD HIM I WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO INFORM HIM THAT USG COULD NOT ACCEDE TO HIS REQUEST AS ORIGINALLY PRESENTED TO ME BY YOUSSEOUFOU THAT MCHALE BE WITHDRAWN VOLUNTARILY. I REPEATED EARLIER REGRETS ABOUT MISUSE OF FACILITIES AND INSTITUTION NEW TIGHT CONTROLS. I ALSO REPEATED THAT USG VIEWED EXPULSION OF PAO FOR WHAT WAS DONE WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE AND POSSIBLY EVEN BEFORE HIS ARRIVAL IN COUNTRY AS A GRAVE MATTER AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN TOTALITY OF US-NIGER RELATIONS. PRESIDENT RESPONDED BY SAYING QUESTION WAS NOT WHETHER IT COULD BE PROVED CONCLUSIVELY MCHALE WAS OR WAS NOT IN COUNTRY WHEN INCIDENT HAPPENED. PRIMARY REASON HE WANTED MCHALE TO LEAVE WAS THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAD LOST CONFIDENCE IN HIM AND THAT ONLY LOGICAL CONCLUSION WAS TO TRANSFER HIM. HE WENT ON TO SAY HE COULD NOT SEE HOW USG COULD REFUSE HIS REQUEST, BUT IF IT WERE NOT ACCEPTED HE WOULD QUOTE ACT LIKE A BOKASSA OR A TOMBALBAYE AND PUBLICLY DECLARE PAO PERSONA NON GRATA FOR INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF NIGER UNQUOTE. HE ASKED ME WHOSE INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED IF HE WERE FORCED TO TAKE SUCH DRASTIC ACTION. PRESIDENT MADE POINT OF SAYING HE WOULD WELCOME A REPLACEMENT FOR MCHALE AND A CONTINUATION OF THE CENTER, BUT CAUTIONED THAT NEW PAO WOULD HAVE TO ENSURE STRICTER CONTROLS. PRESIDENT ASKED THAT I INFORM HIM PERSONALLY CONCERNING USG RESPONSE.

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5. PRESIDENT DIORI WAS NOT TO BE BUDGED FROM HIS DECISION TO ASK WITHDRAWAL OF MCHALE. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT BROUGHT OUT SOME ADDITIONAL FACTORS NOT MENTIONED BY YOUSSEOUFOU. KABA MAY HAVE CONFESSED TO SECURITY TO HAVE USED CENTER'S FACILITIES DURING MCHALE'S TENURE ALTHOUGH HE DENIED THIS TO MCHALE. DIORI NEVERTHELESS DID NOT SEEM TO BE BASING HIS DECISION ASK WITHDRAWAL SPECIFICALLY ON WHEN SURREPTITIOUS PRINTING TOOK PLACE BUT ON BASIS THAT HE NO LONGER HAS CONFIDENCE IN PAO AT TIME WHEN GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH STUDENT/TEACHER PROBLEMS. PRESIDENT DID NOT ELABORATE FURTHER, DESPITE MY PROBING, ON WHAT SPECIFICALLY LED TO LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN MCHALE.

6. I AM AWARE THAT USG POSITION ON BASIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED NIAMEY 238 AND 266 IS THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEDE TO DIORI'S REQUEST THAT MCHALE BE WITHDRAWN VOLUNTARILY AND I SO INFORMED DIORI. NEVERTHELESS MCHALE'S FURTHER EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGER IS NIL AS A RESULT OF WHAT DIORI HAS CONCLUDED ABOUT HIM. EVEN

IF DIORI HAD RECONSIDERED HIS DECISION LAST EVENING AND OFFERED TO ALLOW MCHALE TO STAY, AFTER IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO ME THAT MCHALE NO LONGER HAD CONFIDENCE OF PRESIDENT, I WOULD HAVE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ASK DEPARTMENT TO REPLACE HIM REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT I CONSIDER DIORI'S BASIS FOR CLAIMING LOSS OF CONFIDENCE AS EXTREMELY FLIMSY AND SUBJECTIVE.

7. DIORI WAS EXPLICIT IN SAYING THAT IF MCHALE IS NOT TRANSFERRED, HE WILL EXPEL HIM PUBLICLY. SINCE DEPARTMENT WISHES TO AVOID PUBLIC DECLARATION OF MCHALE AS PERSONA NON GRATA, I RECOMMEND I BE AUTHORIZED INFORM PRESIDENT DIORI THAT WHILE WE FULLY CONVINCED OF MCHALE'S NON-INVOLVEMENT IN ANY WAY WITH NIGER'S STUDENT/TEACHER TROUBLES, ON THE BASIS THAT PRESIDENT HAS LOST CONFIDENCE IN HIM AND HE CAN NO LONGER FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AS PAO IN NIGER, WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO WITHDRAW HIM. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS.
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